

Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

This publication was produced in 2000 as
a joint project of:

Wisconsin Department of Natural
Resources - Division of Forestry and the
Bureau of Endangered Resources,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
The Nature Conservancy,
International Paper,
Stora Enso and
Plum Creek.

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and reference publication number FR-174



HANDSOME SEDGE

(*Carex formosa*)

Federal Status: Not Listed

State Status: Threatened



Description: Handsome sedge grows in tufts or clumps 1 to 2 feet tall, its stems purple at their bases. The main leaves are slender, $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide and hairy on their underside. From the



center of the clump of leaves arises a stem on which the small greenish flowers are borne. The seeds that ripen from female flowers are about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide, with three sharp lengthwise ridges. A good hand lens or dissecting microscope helps when identifying sedges.

Habitat: Handsome sedge grows in moist calcareous soil in deciduous woods and thickets. Also, it is sometimes found in meadows.

Forestry Considerations: Handsome sedge prefers sites with light, dappled shade. Selective tree harvest that maintains this level of shade is compatible with the continued existence of this rare sedge.

